

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 20489 171942Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 MCT-01 OMB-01 DHA-02 IO-13 AID-05 /080 W
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R 171546Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1815
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, IT
SUBJ: WAVE OF VIOLENCE IS DOMINANT POLITICAL ISSUE

REF: ROME 19850

1. SUMMARY. THE PREVIOUSLY-REPORTED UPWARD TREND OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS BURST INTO THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS WITH ATTACKS ON AN ANTI-TERRORIST OFFICIAL IN ROME, THE MURDER OF A POLICE OFFICIAL IN MILAN AND A BOMB EXPLOSION IN BRESCIA. THE DC AND PCI NEWSPAPERS CLASHED OVER THE PCI INTERPRETATION OF THE TERROR AS "FASCIST." THE PSI SECRETARY'S CALL FOR A COLLEGIAL MEETING OF THE SECRETARIES OF ALL "DEMOCRATIC" PARTIES WAS ACCEPTED BY PM ANDREOTTI. THE SOCIALISTS SEE THE VIOLENCE, WHICH CONTINUED TO RISE IN THE FIRST HALF OF DECEMBER, AS JUSTIFICATION FOR A "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY" INCLUDING THE PCI. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL NOTED THAT THE TREND OF POLITICALLY-RELATED VIOLENCE WAS UNMISTAKABLY UP, BUT COMMENTED THAT THE INCREASE HAD NOT YET COME TO THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION.
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PAGE 02 ROME 20489 171942Z

NONE OF THE VIOLENT ACTS THEN REPORTED HAD RESULTED IN DEATH. THE WAVE OF LETHAL VIOLENCE WHICH HAS SWEEPED ITALY BEGINNING ON DECEMBER 14 BRUSQUELY CHANGED THAT. AS THE TOLL OF DEAD AND SERIOUSLY INJURED HAS RISEN, POLITICALLY-RELATED VIOLENCE HAS BECOME TOPIC NUMBER ONE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE PUBLIC MEDIA HAVE AMPLY

REPORTED THE DETAILS OF THE CURRENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF A ROMAN ANTI-TERRORIST OFFICIAL (DECEMBER 14--TWO DEA AND TWO WOUNDED), AND CONTINUED WITH THE MURDER OF A MILAN ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF BY A MEMBER OF THE "RED BRIGADES" (DECEMBER 15--THREE DEAD) AND THE BOMB EXPLOSION IN BRESCIA (DECEMBER 16--ONE DEA AND EIGHT WOUNDED, SOME SERIOUSLY).

3. EARLY COMMUNIST COMMENTS LABELED THE FIRST TWO INCIDENTS, BOTH APPARENTLY PERPETRATED BY EXTREME LEFTIST GROUPS, AS "FASCIST." THIS APPELLATION WAS GIVEN ACCORDING TO THE STRANGE LEFTIST LOGIC THAT ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE "RED BRIGADES" AND THE "ARMED PROLETARIAN NUCLEI" ARE REALLY "FASCIST" BECAUSE THE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE WHICH THEY CREATE SERVES THE ENDS OF THE "MOST REACTIONARY EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FORCES." L'UNITA SAID THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CURRENT VIOLENCE IS "DESTABILIZATION" OF THE STATE (THE SAME WORKING USED TO DESCRIBE THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FALL OF ALLENDE IN CHILE), AND ASSERTED THAT THE PRESENT TERRORISM AND PLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS "INDISCUSSIBLE" INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS. THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE DC, IL POPOLO, PICKED UP THIS PCI INTERPRETATION AND ATTACKED IT, POINTING OUT THAT IT IS READILY APPARENT THAT THERE ARE "CLEAR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONNIVANCES" BETWEEN THE LEFTIST TERRORISTS AND THE EXTREME POLITICAL LEFT. THE DC ORGAN WARNED THAT THE FIRST STEP TOWARD COMBATTING THE BIOLENCE MUST BE TO HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF WHERE THE PERIL ORIGINATES.

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PAGE 03 ROME 20489 171942Z

WE NOTED WITH INTEREST THAT THE DECEMBER 17 EDITION OF L'UNITA CONSPICUOUSLY OMITTED BOTH IDENTIFICATION OF THE VIOLENCE AS "FASCIST" AND THE RITUAL CALL FOR UNITY OF ALL THE "ANTI-FASCIST" FORCES. THE ALLEGED INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS OF THE TERROR CONTINUED, HOWEVER, TO FIND REFERENCE.

4. THE SOCIALISTS, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE PSI SOURCE, VIEW THE CURRENT VIOLENCE AS ANOTHER REASON WHY ITALY NEEDS A "GOVERNMENT OF EMERGENCY." IN LINE WITH THIS, PSI SECRETARY CRAXI TELEPHONED PM ANDREOTTI AND REQUESTED A MEETING OF THE SECRETARIES OF ALL THE "DEMOCRATIC" PARTIES WITH THE PM. THE COLLEGIAL MEETING WAS NECESSARY, SAID CRAXI, TO ASSURE "THE FULL SOLIDARITY OF ALL THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES." AFTER CONSULTING THE LEADERS OF OTHER PARTIES, PM ANDREOTTI AGREED TO THE MEETING, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 17. THE PSI NEWSPAPER, AVANTI, CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO

STRIKE MERCILESSLY AND WITH COURAGE AND POLITICAL DETERMINATION AGAINST THOSE WHO SPREAD TERROR. COMMENT:
IF THE VIOLENCE CONTINUES, MORE CREDIT MAY BE GIVEN TO THE PSI SUGGESTION FOR A "GOVERNMENT OF EMERGENCY" WITH PARTICIPATION OF THE PCI. END COMMENT.

5. IN NOTING THE RISING TREND OF POLITICALLY-RELATED VIOLENCE, REFTEL STATED THAT THE NUMBER OF VIOLENT ACTS REPORTED AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED DURING EACH SEMI-MONTHLY PERIOD HAD RISEN FROM FOUR FROM OCTOBER 1-15 TO 42 FROM NOVEMBER 15-30. WE CAN NOW REPORT THAT THE TRFD CONTINUED DURING THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1-15, WHEN WE SAW 61 REPORTS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE. THE FOLLOWING WERE THE TARGETS OF THE VIOLENT ACTS IN THE MOST RECENT PERIOD:

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY 16
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY 12
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PAGE 04 ROME 20489 171942Z

(NOT INCLUDING COMMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE)
COMMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE 3
GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-RELATED
INSTITUTIONS 8
ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY 8
ITALIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT (MSI) 7
THE CHURCH 3
COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA 2
EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES 1
EXTREME LEFT 1

6. WE OBSERVE THAT THE MOST RECENT VIOLENCE WAS DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TARGETS IN ROUGHLY THE SAME PROPORTIONS AS THE EARLIER ACTS HAD BEEN. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ATTRACTED AN EVEN HIGHER PERCENTAGE THAN BEFORE, WITH THE DC (PLUS CL) CLOSE BEHIND. THE NUMBER OF ATTACKS AGAINST THE PCI INCREASED FROM UNDER 7 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL TO OVER 13 PERCENT. EVEN THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE PCI'S TENDENCY TO PORTRAY THE PCI AS THE TARGET OF A VERITABLE WAVE OF TERROR. BEAUDRY

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